

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Chamberlain Academy
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

Team Members: Penny McCormick-Gilles & Chris Sargent, Education Specialists

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Date of Report: May 31, 2006

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Student progress data
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Comprehensive system of personnel development plan
- District annual needs assessment
- Teacher Assistance Team (TAT): referral vs. non referral information

- Needs assessment information (such as personnel, facilities, etc)
- Personnel training
- Student files
- State data tables

Meets Requirements

The steering committee found that the district's child find activities are implemented through on-going referrals from regular education teachers, special education teachers, administrators, residential service providers, parents, social workers and/or juvenile corrections officers. Birth-5 activities were not conducted because Chamberlain Academy is not a public school entity.

The steering committee reports the district uses an effective pre-referral and referral system. A TAT team is utilized to assist students before the referral process begins.

Based upon the suspension and expulsion data (table C) Chamberlain Academy has never placed a student in an alternative educational setting and this is not an option, as Chamberlain Academy is a 24 hour residential treatment facility. The committee finds that this area meets requirements.

The steering committee noted that East Dakota Educational Coop. ensures that Chamberlain Academy employs adequate personnel who are appropriately supervised, and fully licensed or certified, to work with children with disabilities. The district comprehensive plan/procedures has established procedures for the employment of special education personnel who have the special education endorsements as required in state rules. Child evaluators and 100% of the district staff meets state certification or licensure requirements for the provision of special education.

Promising Practices

The steering committee feels that the weekly meetings held to discuss concerns regarding students' success in the regular classroom are a promising practice. Modifications and accommodations that are implemented in the classroom are discussed at this time. District staff encourages the active involvement of administration and educational staff from each student's home school district.

Star Reading and Star Math assessments are given to all students upon enrollment at Chamberlain Academy and to all students three times a year to informally assess academic achievement and progress.

Chamberlain Academy, a residential treatment facility, has an educational component, provided by East Dakota Educational Cooperative, fully accredited by the South Dakota Department of Education.

Chamberlain Academy is in session 12 months a year with a 253 day on role. This provides an opportunity to complete three semesters in a year which allows a student to earn more credits toward graduation.

The steering committee determined in the area of professional development the following items were promising practices:

All teachers receive at least 52 hours of in-service training yearly, mandated by social services, on working with at risk students. East Dakota Educational Cooperative encourages attendance at workshops by providing paid time off, meal, lodging and mile reimbursement when staff attend approved workshops. East Dakota Educational Cooperative forwards opportunities for training/workshops to staff in outlying areas and encourages membership on professional organizations by reimbursing membership cost up to \$100 yearly per teacher. They also have an annual Coop wide in-service/training.

Funding is allocated and opportunities are available and encouraged to all educational staff for continued educational advancement and learning beyond annual district-wide required trainings.

Needs Improvement

Since no in-house referrals have been made, the steering committee found that there is a need to heighten teacher awareness regarding the pre-referral process for students who may be in need of services. The referral forms and process for using them were reviewed at a teachers' meeting and have been placed in a shared network folder.

The committee feels that the system that is in place for evaluation needs revision to reflect new evaluation concepts and ideas and the changes in educational methodology

Not Applicable

There are no private schools in the district and students are not placed out of the district. Students attending Chamberlain Academy are placed here by various agencies, including DOC, DSS, BIA, and parents do not have the option of determining when they will be released; therefore, the committee finds that voluntarily enrollment in private schools by parents does not apply to this district.

Validation Results

Promising Practices

Through interviews the review team verified that Chamberlain Academy goes beyond what is expected in the area of professional development for their staff. This is felt to be a promising practice.

The review team established that Chamberlain Academy has weekly meetings to discuss concerns as well as doing ongoing assessments to determine student progress. They feel that these are best practices rather than promising practices, and therefore would be in the meets requirements section.

As a residential facility, Chamberlain would be expected to have an accredited educational component. The year round school is a part of their program; thus, both of these areas were found to meet requirements rather than be considered promising practices.

Meets Requirements

The review team agrees with all areas that the steering committee found as meeting requirements for child find and general supervision with the exception of the statement that 100% of the district staff meets state certification or licensure requirements for the provision of special education

Areas that need improvement

The review team agrees with the items that the steering committee felt needed improvement.

Areas out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:16:16. Personnel standards.

To ensure that all personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of Part B and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, the division shall determine that all personnel providing special education or related services, including early intervention and early childhood personnel, perform these functions under state-approved or state-recognized certification or licensure or other comparable requirements that apply to the area in which the person is providing instruction or other service. Based on interviews with special education staff it was determined that one of their special education teachers is not certified in the area of special education. She was under an authority to act which had expired and was not renewed.

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Numbers of children screened
- School-age
- Student progress data
- Personnel development information
- Number of referrals that do not result in evaluation
- District records of release to outside agencies
- Needs assessment information
- Personnel training

Promising Practices

The steering committee felt that it is a promising practice that Chamberlain Academy is in session 12 months a year with 253 days on role and provides an opportunity for the students to increase their knowledge and skills which also reduces the regression factor.

They also agreed that it is a promising practice that Chamberlain Academy an alternative setting that can be used by other school districts.

The committee found that if a child with a disability is placed at Chamberlain Academy:

- The child is able to continue to progress in the regular curriculum,
- the child continues to receive special education services as described in the child's IEP; and
- receives services and modifications to address the behavior that resulted in the placement.

These are other areas that they found to be promising practices.

Due to behavior issues that lead to placement at Chamberlain Academy, a comprehensive behavior plan is implemented for all students. Neither students with disabilities, nor their non-disabled peers, are ever removed. These are also felt to be promising practices by the steering committee.

Meets Requirements

Chamberlain Academy does not serve preschool or early elementary students; as a residential facility they only serve children aged 13-18, the committee found that students at the academy are provided a free and appropriate education.

There are no students placed outside the school district. Chamberlain Academy provides a free appropriate public education to all students. Due to the extensive services provided on-site, no students have been placed outside of the district; therefore this is an area that is felt to meet requirements.

The review committee found that feedback was obtained by Chamberlain Academy through the following means: survey distribution, weekly teacher and team meetings, e-mail correspondence, phone and mail correspondence with parents, placing agency personnel, etc. (see phone log), parental participation and input in IEP meetings. Contact with former students is restricted by residential policies which state that

students may contact personnel through Chamberlain Academy, but they are not to initiate contact with the student.

Suspension or expulsion from Chamberlain Academy is not an option because the school is a residential treatment facility, so no students have been suspended for more than 10 days. Due to the nature of the program at Chamberlain Academy the steering committee feels this requirement is met.

Validation Results

Promising Practice

The review team found that Chamberlain does provide an appropriate education to the students who attend the Academy; however, this is a responsibility of the school and is not a promising practice.

Federal and state regulations require that behavior be addressed as a part of the IEP and Chamberlain Academy is doing that. This is not considered to be a promising practice.

Meets Requirements

The review team agrees with the areas that the steering committee felt met requirements.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Teacher file reviews
- Prior notice
- Telephone log
- Evaluation report
- Exit and re-entry into special education
- Number of placement committee overrides
- Surveys
- General curriculum information
- Comprehensive plan
- Initial referral log
- Needs assessment information
- Personnel training
- List of tests currently used in the district (date of publication)
- List of out of district testing services used by the district
- Personnel with designated certification

Promising Practices

In many instances more than three attempts have been made to obtain parental permission.

When students are placed at Chamberlain Academy and the MDT evaluation has expired, the student is re-evaluated and a team determines if there is a need for special education services.

Average student attendance is four to six months. Reevaluations and annual reviews are conducted on schedule to ensure continuation of services.

Meets Requirements

The steering committee ascertained that Chamberlain Academy provides appropriate written notice and attempts to obtain consent (via mail and phone) before assessments are administered to a child as part of an evaluation or reevaluation.

The committee finds that Chamberlain Academy has made a conscientious effort to determine the students eligible for Special Education services.

Through a review of files the steering committee felt that Chamberlain Academy ensures that reevaluations are conducted in accordance with all procedural requirements in a manner that addresses continued eligibility.

Areas that need improvement

Chamberlain Academy is seeking clarification in its responsibility once another district has identified a student as LEP. Some of the students are identified in the SIMS as LEP, but no documentation of assessment results determining this have been sent to the school. These are students not currently being evaluated. The steering committee agreed that this is an area that needs to be improved.

The steering committee also noted the need to improve by listing the evaluations and evaluators on consent and prior notice after the team, including the student's parent(s), has determined what evaluations need to be given.

The file reviews completed by the school showed that functional assessments were completed by gathering classroom samples, but were not documented. The steering committee found this to be another area that needed improvement.

More comprehensive functional assessments have been completed and added to the MDT and evaluation results and the committee would like to see this being done consistently.

Areas out of compliance

The steering committee felt that a statement regarding testing conditions must be included in all evaluation reports. As this was not included in all reports the deemed this to be out of compliance.

The MDT report for a student identified as having a Learning Disability needs to document all required content. The form being used was found to be out of compliance by the committee. A form has been identified to use to help ensure all information is included.

Validation Results

Promising Practices

The review team is in agreement that making attempts to contact parents, conducting reevaluations when an MDT has expired, and conducting reevaluations and annual reviews on schedule are all procedures that should be followed. Therefore, they are not considered promising practices, but rather areas that meet requirements.

Meets Requirements

Based on interviews and file reviews, the review team agrees with all areas that the steering committee felt met requirements.

Areas that need improvement

The questions about LEP are valid and the team agrees that this is an area Chamberlain Academy should address.

The review team feels that Chamberlain Academy needs to list the evaluations and evaluators on consent and prior notice. This should include a statement that the student's parent(s) have also had input in the determination as to what evaluations need to be given.

Six new files reviewed by the team had functional information documented in the report and the MDT form; this meets requirements.

Areas out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:25:04: Evaluation procedures

School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, that evaluation procedures include the following:

- (1) Tests and other evaluation materials are provided and administered in the child's native language or by another mode of communication that the child understands, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. Any standardized tests that are given to a child:
 - (a) Have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used; and
 - (b) Are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel in conformance with the instructions provided by their producer.

Through interviews and file reviews the review team found behavior rating scales that were designed to be interpreted by a school psychologist were being given and interpreted by special education staff.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Parental rights document
- Consent and prior notice forms
- Needs assessment information
- Public awareness information

- Family Education Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) disclosure
- Review of access logs
- Personnel training

Promising Practices

When discussing graduation requirements, students are informed that different schools have different requirements for graduation. If they attend a different school they will need to meet the requirements for graduation set forth by the school they are attending at the time of graduation unless their IEP has made adjustments in the requirements.

Meets Requirements

The steering committee noted that 100 percent of parents who responded to the surveys reported receiving information from the school in their own language. Procedural safeguards are provided to parents with every prior notice for a meeting, when prior notice/consent is sent, and with the copy of the IEP to ensure parents are informed of their parental rights.

The committee agreed that consent is obtained for evaluations.

They also found that parents are provided copies of the IEP's and confidentiality is maintained.

Validation Results

Promising Practices

While the review team agrees that Chamberlain Academy does an excellent job trying to prepare students for issues regarding graduation should they return to another school, this would be considered best practice rather than a promising practice; therefore, it meets requirements.

Meets Requirements

The review team found that Chamberlain Academy meets requirements in all areas noted by the steering committee.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher file reviews
- Student progress data
- Personnel development information
- Needs assessment information
- Personnel training

Promising Practices

Parents are informed they may participate over the phone at Chamberlain Academy's expense if they are not able to attend the IEP meeting, this was considered to be a promising practice by the steering committee.

Another area they agreed to be a promising practice was the fact that the prior notice includes information informing parents they may invite other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding their child, including related service personnel as appropriate.

All students are invited to and attend their IEP meetings and it is common practice that all students attend their IEP meeting.

Distance and transportation is an issue for many parents. To accommodate parents, prior notices document that the IEP meeting can be held via conference call. This option has allowed many parents to be part of the decision making team and participate in the IEP meeting. This was also considered by the committee to be a promising practice.

All students entering Chamberlain Academy on a current IEP have an addendum meeting as this helps all teachers be aware of the needs of the child. The committee felt this was a promising practice.

Meets Requirements

The steering committee found that written notice was given to all parents concerning IEP meetings, and any notices contained all required content.

The committee felt that Chamberlain Academy does everything it can to ensure the IEP team is comprised of appropriate membership and even invites other residential/program staff involved in the student's program. Chamberlain Academy is diligent in making sure all students leave with a current IEP and 3-year reevaluations.

File reviews conducted by the school and parent reports indicated to the steering committee that IEP's written at Chamberlain Academy contained all necessary content.

Chamberlain Academy administers a transition survey from the South Dakota Transition toolbox to help students plan for transition as part of their IEP and/or 3-year re-evaluation and the committee felt that this met the requirements for the transition information needed on the IEP.

A release of records is sent out immediately upon enrollment at Chamberlain Academy. Once all pertinent information has been received, a meeting is scheduled with appropriate personnel invited. If needed, a surrogate parent is appointed. The steering committee determined all requirements for this area are met due to limitations of students changing schools, truancy and other factors.

Areas that need improvement

Meeting notices need to be proofread to be sure all needed information is included. The prior notice form was modified to include notification to parents informing them they may invite other representatives.

More comprehensive transition tools need to be administered to students. When transition is being addressed, reports on results should be included in assessment results. Chamberlain Academy will need to promote better self advocacy so that students will feel more involved in their IEP meeting/progress. Progress reports could be done in a more timely manner.

Areas needed in the present levels of performance should be documented in a manner that is reader friendly. For example using headers for strengths, weaknesses, how disability affects student progress and involvement in the regular classroom and parental input. Teachers also need to be aware of the difference between “extended school year” needed and students attending school in a year round school. Present levels of performance should tie directly into the goals on the IEP. Students should also be more involved in determining course of study and linking life planning closely to classes selected.

Validation Results

Promising Practices

The review team agrees that the areas in principle five considered by the steering committee to be promising practices are actually required by South Dakota regulations, with the exception of students under 16 where it is considered best practice to invite them to IEP meetings. All of these areas meet requirements.

Meets Requirements

The review team agrees with the steering committee that the requirements for an IEP team are met.

They also agree that the IEP content is acceptable with the exception of configuration of services and the present levels of performance. The review team also noted that all current files of students 16 or older had a coordinated set of activities, reflecting student strengths and interests, to prepare them for post school activities.

Areas that need improvement

Through interviews and a review of IEP's the team noted that the special education teachers had some questions about how to document the amount of time services were provided. While good functional information was found in the report and reflected in the goals, concerns were expressed by the staff about how to document this information on the PLOP page. It is felt that these are areas where further training would be advised.

The team agrees with the areas found to need improvement with the exception of those related to transition. Chamberlain Academy is now using the Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scale and of the six files of transition aged student reviewed all addressed transition correctly. This is an area that meets requirements.

Out of Compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program. Each student's individualized education program shall include: (3) A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the student, or on behalf of the student, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the student:

The monitoring team determined this area is out of compliance based on interviews and file reviews. Students IEP's do not reflect the actual service being provided. Students are listed as either receiving 0 hours or 6 hours a day of special education services and not the specific number of hours of service they need to be successful.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- File reviews
- Parent, Student, General educator surveys
- General curriculum information
- Needs assessment information
- Personnel training

Meets Requirements

The steering committee noted that due to the modifications, such as: shortened assignments and tests, tests read aloud, extended time for assignment and test completion, peer tutoring, and other modifications listed on student IEP's, and individualized curriculum, all of the students at Chamberlain Academy are able to succeed in the regular classroom and general curriculum with their non-disabled peers.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The review team agrees with the findings of the steering committee.